

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6819

USMISSION USBERLIN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV GW WB FR US UK UR

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER MEETINGS OF COUNCIL OF

ELDERS AND PRESIDIUM IN BERLIN

REF: BONN 3349

BEGIN SUMMARY. THE FRG PRESS SPOKESMAN HAS RETRACTED HIS STATEMENT (REFTEL) THAT THE ONLY ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN THE THREE ALLIED POWERS AND THE BUNDESTAG. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE STILL FRONTpaged in some Saturday papers, the controversy over a possible meeting in Berlin of the Presidium and Council of Elders of the Bundestag received considerably less play than on the previous two days.

2. Both "DIE WELT" and "GENERAL ANZEIGER" on February 28 published DPA reports datelined Berlin/Bonn, to the effect that "Allied circles" had confirmed their

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OPPOSITION TO SUCH A MEETING BECAUSE OF THE "CURRENT

POLITICAL SITUATION." "DIE WELT" ALSO REPORTED THAT THE ALLIES HAD DENIED IN BERLIN THAT THEY HAD CONSULTED ABRASIMOV BEFORE TAKING THEIR POSITION.

3. BOTH PAPERS ALSO REFERRED TO A STATEMENT WHICH GOVERNMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN GRUENEWALD ISSUED LATE ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 27, CORRECTING SOME OF THE REMARKS MADE IN HIS MORNING PRESS BRIEFING (REFTEL). AS REPORTED BY DPA, GRUENEWALD SAID THAT HIS STATEMENT THAT THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN LIMITED TO THAT OF "INTERMEDIARY" BETWEEN THE BUNDESTAG PRESIDIUM AND THE THREE POWERS HAD BEEN BASED ON MISTAKEN INFORMATION. HE SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE ALLIED POWERS WOULD OPPOSE A MEETING OF THE PRESIDIUM AND COUNCIL OF ELDERS IN BERLIN HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS BY BERLIN CDU DEPUTY JUERGEN WOHLRABE, AND THAT WOHLRABE'S QUESTION HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE GOVERNMENT AT THE WORKING LEVEL.

4. GRUENEWALD WENT ON THAT THERE WERE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE THREE WESTERN POWERS ON MATTERS WHICH AFFECT THE SPECIAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE THREE POWERS IN BERLIN. THESE CONFIDENTIAL CONSULTATIONS, HOWEVER, HAD NOT RESULTED IN ANY NEW POSITION ON THE QUESTION AT HAND.

5. ACCORDING TO "DIE WELT," CSU DEPUTY MAX KUNZ HAS POSED A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS OF THE OPINION THAT A MEETING OF THE PRESIDIUM AND COUNCIL OF ELDERS IN BERLIN WOULD EXCEED THE LIMITS OF FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT.

6. COMMENT: GRUENEWALD'S SUPPLEMENTAL STATEMENT LATE FRIDAY EVENING MAY IN PART HAVE BEEN A CONSEQUENCE OF THE OBJECTIONS WHICH WE AND THE BRITISH HAD EXPRESSED TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE THAT AFTERNOON (PARA 7, REFTEL). WHILE WE HAD NOT REQUESTED OR EXPECTED A RETRACTION, ITS ISSUANCE SUGGESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL AT LEAST BE MORE CAUTIOUS IN ITS HANDLING OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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QUESTION WHEN IT COMES UP IN THE BUNDESTAG.
HILLENBRAND

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